



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S Webster, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707
Phone: (608) 266-6790 TDD: 711
dnr.wi.gov www.wisconsin.gov

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CONTACT: Michael Prager, DNR, (608) 261-4927
SUBJECT: DNR Funding Available To Help Turn Brownfields into Public Places

MADISON – Local Wisconsin governments looking to turn brownfields in their communities into parks, libraries or other public places can apply for grants of up to \$200,000 available through a unique state program intended to help municipalities clean up properties and return them to public uses.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Brownfield Green Space and Public Facilities Grants program has \$1 million available to help municipalities clean up brownfields that will become public resources. Brownfields are abandoned, idle or underused properties where redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination.

“Communities understand the value that green space and public facilities bring to any redevelopment”, said Mark Giesfeldt, director for the DNR Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment. Giesfeldt added that these grants are one of the only state programs in the nation devoted to turning brownfields into green space or other public facilities. This grant program was proposed by the Brownfields Study Group – a non-partisan statewide task force – and first provided awards to 10 communities in 2004.

Those first awards helped fund the cleanup of contaminated land for Oshkosh’s Riverside Park, sports fields for a brand new elementary school in Kenosha, Eau Claire’s Phoenix Park farmer’s market, green space in Delavan’s downtown Ann Street neighborhood, a new park in the Town of Geneva and six other public projects.

Grants of up to \$200,000 are available. Applicants must be ready, or almost ready, to enter the cleanup phase of their project, because the investigation of contaminated areas is not covered by these funds. Applicants must also be ready to commit to long-term public use of the property. However, public ownership is not required prior to applying for a grant.

Applications for Brownfield Green Space and Public Facilities Grants are due July 21, 2006. Any local government – city, village, town, county, redevelopment authority, community development authority, or housing authority – or tribe is eligible to compete. DNR will help by discussing project eligibility with potential applicants. The application and applicant instructions are available on the Remediation and Redevelopment Program pages of the DNR Web site at:
http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/rbrownfields/greenspace_grant.